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HEINRICH HEINE'S MUSICAL FEUILLETONS¹

IN his "Musical Reports" from Paris of the year 1840, Heine gives a glowing word-picture of Liszt's playing. And in his "Musical Reports" of the year 1841, after an introduction in which the Paris *Salon* of that year serves as a pivot upon which to swing his musical narration, he again reverts to Liszt, before passing on to other lions of the season. It might be mentioned, in parenthesis, that Heine makes no allusion to Liszt's accusation directed against his rival in interpretation, Paganini, that the latter was guilty of "narrow egoism." Liszt declared that "the divine service of conviction" bestowed an almost sacerdotal power and responsibility on genius which Paganini failed to appreciate. He also expressed the hope that "Paganini was the last resplendent representative of his narrow egotistical rôle." This public declaration was made in the year 1841, that of the "Musical Season" which follows.

MUSICAL SEASON OF 1841

Paris, April 20, 1841.

The Salon this year discloses only brightly-colored impotence. One might almost believe that the renascence of the plastic arts had come to an end in our case; there was no new spring, only a pitiful Indian summer. Painting and sculpture, even architecture, took on a joyous uplift after the July Revolution, but the wings were only externally attached, and a deplorable fall succeeded the forced flight. Only the youthful sister art, music, has risen in her primitive and peculiar power. Has she as yet attained her utmost point of radiance? Will she long maintain herself there? Or will she rapidly sink again? These are questions which only a future generation can answer. At any rate, it appears as though the contemporary present might be preferably entered in the annals of art as the age of music. The arts keep pace with the gradual spiritualization of the human race. In the earliest periods architecture had of necessity to advance alone, glorifying rude and unconscious grandeur in its massivity, as, for instance, we may see in the case of the Egyptians. Later, among the Greeks, we behold the age of florescence of sculpture, and this already betokens an external control of matter; the spirit chisels a divining,

¹Concluded from the April, 1922, number.

half-guessed meaning in the stone. Yet the spirit found stone too hard for its increasing needs of revelation, and chose color, the bright shadow, in order to depict a dawning world of love and anguish. Then the great epoch of paintings arose, which developed with splendor toward the end of the Middle Ages. With the cultivation of self-consciousness in life all plastic endowment vanishes among men, in the end even the sense of color dies out, which after all is ever held down to definite drawing, and enhanced spiritually, and abstract thought clutches at sounds and tones in order to express a stammering extravagance which is, perhaps, nothing else than the solution of all the world of matter: music may be the last word in art, as death is the last word in life!

I have here apposed this short initial consideration in order to point out why the musical season intimidates rather than pleases me. That we are fairly drowning here in music, that there is hardly a single house in Paris wherein one may take refuge, as in an ark, from this flood of sound, that the noble art of tone inundates our whole life, this for me is a grave symptom, and at times, because of it, I am seized with a great ill-humor, degenerating into the most cantankerous injustice as regards our great *maestri* and virtuosos. Under these circumstances one need not expect the cheeriest kind of a song of praise on my part for the man about whom the fine world here, especially the world of hysterical ladies, is jubilating with the most insane enthusiasm; and who, in fact, is one of the most remarkable representatives of the musical movement. I am speaking of Franz Liszt, the genial pianist, whose playing at times seems to me like the melodic agony of the world of visions. Yes, the genius is here once more, and gives concerts which exert a magic bordering on the miraculous. Beside him all other pianists disappear—with one single exception, Chopin, the Raphael of the pianoforte. In fact, with this exception, all the other pianists whom we have heard in countless concerts this year are merely pianists, they shine because of the agility with which they handle the stringed wood; in Liszt's case, however, one no longer thinks of difficulties overcome, the piano disappears, and music is made manifest. In this connection Liszt, since we last heard him, has made the most astonishing progress. With this advantage he combines a calmness which we formerly missed in him. When, for instance, he used to play a thunderstorm on the piano, we saw the lightning flashes cross his own face, his limbs trembled as though in the stormwind, and his long locks of hair seemed to drip the thundershower he depicted. Now, when he plays the most powerful tempest, he still towers above himself, like the traveller who stands on an Alpine peak while the lightning storm rages in the valley; the clouds lying far below him, the lightning darting snake-like at his feet, while his head is uplifted, smiling in the pure air.

In spite of his geniality, Liszt has encountered an opposition¹ here in Paris. It is one made up mainly of serious musicians who hand the laurel wreath to his rival, the imperial Thalberg. Liszt has already given two concerts in which, contrary to custom, to all traditions, he played alone

¹"This opposition was, perhaps, due to that very geniality of his. The quality is one which is a tremendous crime in some eyes, one which cannot be sufficiently punished. 'Talent just manages to be excused, but against genius men are inexorable,' Lord Byron, with whom Liszt had many points in common, once said," we read in the version of this letter published in the *Augsburger Allg. Zeitung*.—*Transl.*



Fr. Liszt.

without the assistance of other musicians. He is now preparing a third concert for the benefit of the Beethoven monument. This composer, in truth, must be the one whom Liszt's taste would find most congenial. Beethoven, for a fact, carries the spiritual in art to that sounding agony of the visionary world, that destruction of nature, which makes me shudder with a dread I cannot conceal, though my friends shake their heads over it. I find it a most significant circumstance that Beethoven became deaf toward the end of his days, and that even the invisible world of tone no longer had sonal reality for him. His tones were no more than the recollections of a tone, the ghosts of sounds which had died away, and his last works bear a gruesome death-mark on their foreheads.

Less ghastly than Beethoven's music did I find Beethoven's friend,¹ *l'Ami de Beethoven*, as he everywhere produced himself here, I believe even on his visiting-cards. A black hop-pole with a terrible white cravat and a funereal countenance. Was this friend of Beethoven really his Pylades? Or was he one of those indifferent acquaintances whose company a man of genius enjoys all the more, perhaps, at times, the more insignificant they are, and the more prosaic is their chatter, which refreshes him after exhausting poetic flights on the wings of the spirit. At any rate, we have here a new manner of exploiting genius, and the little papers make not a little fun of *l'Ami de Beethoven*. "How could the great artist find such an unedifying, mentally impoverished friend supportable?" cried the French, who lost all patience at the monotonous chatter of their tiresome guest. They did not remember that Beethoven was deaf!

The number of concert-givers during this year's season has been legion, and there has been no dearth of mediocre pianists who have been acclaimed as miracles by the papers. Most of them are young folk, who in their own modest persons, or through the medium of some modest brother or other, favor the appearance of these songs of praise in the press. Self-worship of this kind, the so-called advertisements, offers most amusing reading. One advertisement recently contained in the *Gazette musicale*, reported from Marseilles that the celebrated Döhler had conquered all hearts there, also, especially because of his interesting pallor, which, a consequence of an illness from which he had just recovered, had attracted the attention of the world of beauty. The celebrated Döhler has since returned to Paris, and has given several concerts; he also played at the concert of M. Schlessinger, of the *Gazette musicale*, who rewarded him most liberally with laurel wreaths. The *France musicale* also sings his praise, and with the same absence of partisanship. This journal cultivates a blind hatred for Liszt, and in order to prick the lion praises the little rabbit. But what does the value of the celebrated Döhler really amount to? Some say that he is the last among the second-class pianists, others that he is the first among the third-class pianists. As a matter of fact he plays prettily, nicely and neatly. His performance is most charming, evincing astonishing finger dexterity; but giving no evidence of power or spirit. Delicate weakness, elegant impotence, interesting pallor!

¹Anton Felix Schindler, Beethoven's faithful friend and biographer, b. Meedl, Moravia, June 13, 1795; d. Bockenheim, near Frankfort, Jan. 16, 1864.

Among this year's concerts which continue to echo in the memories of music-lovers, must be reckoned the matinées offered their subscribers by the proprietors of the two musical journals. The *France musicale*, published by the brothers Escudier, two amiable, intelligent and artistic young fellows, shone in its concert through the assistance of the Italian singers and of Vieuxtemps, who was looked upon as one of the lions of the musical season. Whether beneath the lion's hairy pelt be hidden a true king of beasts or merely a wretched greyling is more than I can determine. To tell the truth, I cannot believe the exaggerated praises which were heaped upon him. It would seem to me that he has not as yet climbed to any remarkable height along the ladder, at whose end we once saw Paganini and on whose last, lowest rung stands our admirable Sina, the celebrated bathing-guest of Boulogne, and the owner of a Beethoven autograph. Perhaps M. Vieuxtemps is much nearer M. Sina than he is to Paganini.

Vieuxtemps is a son of Belgium, and as a general thing the most important violinists have come from the Netherlands. There the violin is the national instrument, cultivated by large and small, by men and women, as has always been shown in Dutch pictures. The most admirable violinist of this countryside is unquestionably Bériot, Malibran's husband. At times I cannot defend myself against the impression that the soul of his deceased wife dwells in his violin and sings. Only Ernst, the poetic Bohemian, knows how to lure such melting, bleedingly tender tones from his instrument. A countryman of Bériot is Artôt, also an admirable violinist, but whose playing never reminds one of a soul; a spick and span, well-turned-out fellow, whose performance is as smooth and shining as waxed linen. Haumann, the son of the Brussels reprinter, carries on his father's business on the violin; what he plays are neat reprints of the best violinists, their texts ornamented, here and there, with unnecessary original notes and brilliant printers' errors. The brothers Franko-Mendez, who also gave concerts this year, in which they maintained their violinistic talents, were really born in the land of tow-paths and Dutch Doras. The same holds good of Batta, the violoncellist. He is a born Hollander, but came here to Paris at an early age, where his boyish youthfulness pleased the ladies in particular. He was a dear lad, and cried on the 'cello like a child. Although he has grown to be a big boy in the meantime, he cannot give up his habit of whimpering, and recently, when he could not appear in public because of an indisposition, it was generally said that owing to his childish wailing on the violoncello he had finally played himself into a real children's disease, the measles, I believe. He now seems to have completely recovered, however, and the newspapers report that the celebrated Batta is preparing a musical matinée for next Thursday, which will console the public for its long deprivation of its favorite.

The last concert which Mr. Maurice Schlesinger gave the subscribers of his *Gazette musicale*, and which, as I have already mentioned, was one of the most brilliant of the season, had a quite special interest for Germans. And the entire German contingent was gathered together, eager to hear Mlle. Löwe, the celebrated singer, who sang Beethoven's lovely song "Adelaide," in the German tongue. The

Italians and M. Vieuxtemps, who had promised their concurrence, excused themselves while the concert was going on, to the great consternation of the giver of the concert, who, stepping before the audience with the dignity which is all his own, declared that M. Vieuxtemps refused to play because he considered the place and public beneath his dignity. The insolence of this violinist deserves the severest reproof. The place of the concert was the *Salle Musard* in the Rue Vivienne, where only at Carnival time is the cancan danced a bit; while for the remainder of the year the most respectable music by Mozart, Giacomo Meyerbeer and Beethoven is performed. The whim of the Italian singers, Signor Rubini and Signor Lablache, will at all events be forgiven, since nightingales may indulge themselves in the pretension of singing only before a public of golden pheasants and eagles. But Mynheer, the Flemish stork, has no right to be so choice, and to despise a company among which were to be found the most respectable fowls, peacocks and guinea-hens in quantity, and, on occasion as well, the most distinguished German fighting cocks and mud-larks. What kind of success did Mlle. Löwe score at her début? I will state the truth in brief: she sang admirably, pleased all the Germans, and made a fiasco with the French.

As regards this last mishap, I should like to comfort the esteemed singer with the assurance that her very advantages stood in the way of a French success. There is German soulfulness in Mlle. Löwe's voice, a quiet thing which as yet has been revealed to but few Frenchmen, and which is making its way in France only gradually. Had Mlle. Löwe come here a few decades later, she might, perhaps, have earned greater recognition. But thus far the mass of the people is still the same. The French possess wit and passion, and enjoy them best in a restless, stormy, chopped-up, exacerbating form. But this they found completely missing in the German singer, who, in addition, sang them Beethoven's "Adelaide." This calm exhalation of sentiment, these blue-eyed, languishing tones of woodland solitude, these vocalized linden-blossoms with moonlight *obligato*, this dying away in superterrestrial yearning, this arch-German song, woke no echo in the French breast, and was even mocked at because of its trans-Rhenan sensitiveness. At any rate, Mlle. Löwe was very ill-advised with regard to the choice of the numbers she sang. And then, strangely, a maleficent star rules the débuts at the Schlesinger concerts. Many a young artist can tell a sad tale of it. Saddest of all was the case of poor Ignaz Moscheles, who came over to Paris from London a year ago, in order to freshen up his fame a little, a fame which had grown somewhat faded owing to mercantile exploitation. He played at a Schlesinger concert and fell abjectly flat.

Although Mlle. Löwe earned no applause here, all that was possible was done to secure an engagement for her at the *Académie royale de la musique*. Meyerbeer's name was used on this occasion with greater urgency than may have pleased the esteemed master. Is it true that Meyerbeer did not wish to present his new opera for performance in case Mlle. Löwe was not engaged? Did Meyerbeer really make the gratification of the public's wishes dependent upon so small a condition? Is he really so over-modest that he imagines the success

of his new work depends upon the more or less flexible throat of a prima donna?¹

The numerous worshippers and admirers of this master so deserving of admiration observe with regret that the much-honored man, with every new production of his genius, toils so unweariedly to ensure its success, and squanders his best efforts on its most trifling details. His delicate, weakly constitution must suffer under the strain. His nerves grow morbidly overexcited, and owing to his chronic abdominal complaint he often suffers from the prevalent cholérine. The honey of the spirit which drips from his masterpieces and refreshes us costs the master the most terrible bodily pains at times. When I last had the honor of seeing him, I was frightened by his wretched appearance. When I looked at him I thought of the diarrheal god of Tartarian folk-legend, which recounts in a manner horribly droll how this belly-aching cæcal demon once purchased six thousand pots for his own use at the annual fair of Kazan, so that the potter thus became a wealthy man. May heaven grant our highly honored master better health, and may he himself never forget that his thread of life is a very flabby one, and Fate's scissors all the more sharp! May he never forget that lofty interests are bound up with his self-preservation. What is to become of his fame, if he himself, the greatly honored master—may heaven long defer the event!—suddenly were to be torn from the stage of his triumphs by death? Will his family continue that fame of which all Germany is proud?² As regards material resources the family would not be lacking, but it would indeed lack intellectual means. Only the great Giacomo himself, who is not alone general musical director of all royal Prussian musical institutions, but also the conductor of the Meyerbeerian fame, only he can direct the enormous orchestra of this fame. He nods his head, and all the trombones of the great newspapers sound out in

¹In the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* the close of this letter reads as follows: "Well-informed persons assure me that Meyerbeer is quite innocent of the deferred production of his new opera, and that the authority of his name was at times exploited to further extraneous interests; he has placed his complete work at the disposal of the direction of the *Académie royale de la musique* without having made any exacting conditions as regards the leading singer.

"Although, as we have already mentioned, the most intimate virtue of German song, its sweet secretiveness, still remains hidden from the French, it cannot be denied that German music is coming to be largely accepted by the French people, if it be not dominant among them. This is the longing of Undine for a soul. Will the lovely maid be the happier if she gain this soul? We do not care to judge the matter; we only note one fact in this place, one which will, perhaps, afford some explanation of the extraordinary popularity of the great master who created 'Robert le diable' and 'Les Huguenots,' and whose third opera, 'Le Prophète' is awaited with a feverish impatience, a beating of the heart, quite inconceivable. Do not smile when I affirm that in music also—not alone in literature—there is something which mediates among the nations. Owing to the universality of its tongue, music more than any other art is adapted to forming a world public for itself.

"A Frenchman told me lately that he had been initiated into Goethe's poetry by means of the Meyerbeer operas, that the latter had opened for him the portals of the Goethean muse. There is a depth of meaning in this remark, and it wakes the thought in me that German music in general may have been entrusted with the mission, here in France, to advance an understanding of our German literature in the guise of a preluding overture."—*Transl.*

²The French edition reads " . . . of which the German people, and M. Maurice Schlesinger in particular, are proud."—*Transl.*

unison; he winks his eye, and all the violins of praise fiddle in competition; he merely moves his left nostril slightly, and all the feuilletons-flageolets flute forth their sweetest tonal flatteries. Then, too, there are as yet unheard-of antediluvian brasses, trumpets of Jericho, and as yet undiscovered Æolian harps, string instruments of the future, whose employ betokens the most extraordinary gift for instrumentation in the same high degree that our Meyerbeer has, that is to say the art of using all sorts of people as instruments, the least as well as the greatest, and conjuring forth by means of their collective activity a harmony of agreement in public recognition which borders on the miraculous. It is something which none other has known how to do. While the best operas of Mozart and Rossini fell flat on their first performance, and years went by before they were properly appreciated, the masterworks of our noble Meyerbeer already obtain the most unanimous acclaim at their first performance, and the very next day all the papers furnish the merited articles of praise and approval. That happens because of the harmonious working together of the instruments; in melody Meyerbeer must yield the palm to the two masters just mentioned; but he excels them in instrumentation. Heaven knows that he often employs the most despicable of instruments; yet it is, perhaps, just by the use of such that he produces his great effects upon the great mass, which admires, idolizes, honors and even respects him. Who can prove the contrary? From all sides the laurel wreaths fly to him, he wears a whole forest of laurels on his head, he hardly knows how to get rid of them, and pants beneath the verdant burden. He should get himself a little ass which, trotting behind him, might carry the heavy wreaths after his master. But Gouin is jealous and will not permit another to accompany him.

I cannot refrain from mentioning a witty remark ascribed to the musician Ferdinand Hiller. It seems that when some one asked him what he thought of Meyerbeer's operas, Hiller is said to have replied with evasive annoyance: "Oh, do not let us talk politics!"

ROSSINI AND MENDELSSOHN

Paris, Mid-April, 1842.

When I arrived in Cette one fine afternoon last summer, I saw a processional passing along the quay before which the Mediterranean Sea lies outspread, and I shall never forget the sight. In advance walked the fraternities, in their garments of red, white and black, the penitents with capuchins drawn over their heads from which the eyes peered forth spectrally from two holes; lighted wax candles or banners with crosses in their hands. Then came the various monastic orders. There was also a crowd of the laity, men and women, pale, broken figures, who wavered piously along, with a touchingly wretched sing-song. I had often encountered similar sights during my childhood on the Rhine, and I cannot deny that these tones awakened a certain melancholy, a species of homesickness, in me. But what I have never yet seen and what happened to be a custom borrowed from adjacent Spain, was a troupe of children representing the Passion. A little shaver, costumed as we are wont to see the Saviour represented in pictures, wearing the crown of thorns on his head, his long golden hair rolling down sadly

on his shoulders, was panting, bent over by the weight of an enormous wooden cross; glaring drops of blood had been painted on his forehead, and the marks of the wounds on his hands and feet. By his side walked a little girl clad all in black, who, the Mother of Sorrows, bore several swords with gilded hilts on her breast, and was almost melting away in tears—a picture of the most profound grief. Other little boys, who walked behind, represented the apostles, among them Judas, with red hair and a money-bag in his hand. A couple of the lads were also helmeted and armed as Roman legionaries, and swung their sabres. Various children wore the habits of orders and the insignia of the church; there were little Capuchins, little Jesuits, little bishops with staff and mitre, the dearest little nuns, positively none of them more than six years old. And strange to say, a few of the children were also dressed as Cupids, with silken wings and golden quivers, and by the very side of the little Saviour tottered two little creatures much smaller, not more than four years old at the most, in old Franconian shepherd-costume, with ribboned hats and poles, sweet enough to kiss, just like sugar-dolls. They probably represented the shepherds who had stood by the manger of the Christ Child. And can one imagine it, this spectacle excited the most serious devotional feeling in the spectator's soul, and the fact that little innocent children were enacting this greatest and most colossal of martyrdoms, made it all the more touching. This was no aping of the real thing in the historical grand style, no crook-mouthed sanctimoniousness, no Berlin lie of faith. It was the most naïve expression of the most profound of thoughts, and it was its condescendingly childish form which prevented its content from acting destructively on our mind, or annihilating itself. This content itself is so tremendous in its power of grief and exaltation, that it overpowers and bursts the bounds of even the most heroically grandiose and pathetically extended art of presentation. It is for this reason that the greatest artists, painters as well as musicians, have beautified the overwhelming terrors of the Passion with as many flowers as possible, and softened its sanguinary earnestness with playful tenderness—and this, too, is what Rossini did when he composed his "Stabat Mater."¹

This work, Rossini's "Stabat," was the outstanding curiosity of the season just past; a consideration of it is still quite timely, and the faults found with the great master by North-German critics are a very striking tribute to the originality and profundity of his genius. His treatment is too mundane, too sensual, too playful for its spiritual subject, it is too light, too agreeable, too entertaining—thus a few ponderous, tiresome criticasters groan in complaint, who, even if they do not intentionally feign an exaggerated spirituality, at any rate torment themselves with decidedly limited and very erroneous conceptions of sacred music. As in the case of the painters, so with the musicians, an entirely erroneous point of view reigns with regard to the treatment of Christian subjects. The former believe that the truly Christian must be pictured in subtly attenuated contours and as distressedly and colorlessly as possible; Overbeck's drawings are their ideal in this respect.

¹We find a similar comparison in the posthumous "Thoughts and Fancies," in reference to another of Rossini's works: "Rossini's 'Otello' is a Vesuvius which discharges radiant flowers."—*Transl.*

In order to contradict this delusion with a fact, I will call attention to the sacred paintings of the Spanish school:¹ here the rôle of colors and contours is the predominant one, and yet no one will deny that these Spanish paintings breathe the most unimpaired Christianity, or that their painters were any less drunken with faith than the celebrated masters who went over to Catholicism in Rome, in order to be able to paint with more immediate fervor. External aridity and pallor are not the determining signs of Christianity in art; but a certain inner extravagance, which may be conferred neither by baptism nor study, in music as well as in painting, and therefore I find Rossini's "Stabat" actually more Christian than Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's "Paulus," an oratorio which is praised by Rossini's opponents as a model of what is Christian.

Heaven forbid that I appear to utter a reproach against such a worthy master as the composer of "Paulus," and least of all would it occur to the writer of these lines to find fault with the Christianity of the afore-mentioned oratorio because Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy is by birth a Jew! Yet I cannot forbear to point out that at the age when Mendelssohn began to be a Christian in Berlin (the fact is that he was not baptised until he was thirteen) Rossini had already left the churchly, and flung himself into all the worldliness of operatic music. Now, when he has once more given over opera, and has dreamed himself back into the Roman Catholic reminiscences of his youth, to the time when he sang in the minster of Pesaro as a chorister, or assisted at the mass as an acolyte—now, when the old organ-tones once more swell in his memories, and he seizes the pen to write a "Stabat," he truly need not construe the spirit of Christianity for himself scientifically, and still less need he slavishly copy Händel and Sebastian Bach; he need only call up the earliest sounds of his childhood from his soul, and wonderful to relate, despite all the seriousness, the profound sorrow which these sounds reëcho, despite all the power with which they sigh and bleed forth the most powerful of emotions, they still have retained something child-like, and remind me of that presentation of the Passion by children which I had seen at Cette. Yes, I was involuntarily obliged to think of that pious little mummery when I attended the first performance of Rossini's "Stabat Mater": the tremendously exalted martyrdom was pictured therein, but with the naïvest accents of youth; the terrible plaints of the *Mater Dolorosa* were sounded, yet seemed to come from the innocent throat of a little girl; beside the pinions of the darkest grief rustled the wings of all the Cupids of charm; the horrors of the death on the cross were mitigated as though by the dallying play of shepherds; and the feeling of infinity wove about and surrounded the entire work like the blue sky which beamed down upon the processional at Cette, like the blue sea along whose shores it passed with song and music. This is Rossini's eternal graciousness, his inexhaustible gentleness, which no impresario or music-dealer has been able to anger away or even dim. No matter what subtly treacherous experiences he has often had in life, we never find a trace of spleen in his musical productions. Like

¹In his posthumous "Thoughts and Fancies," Heine recurs to Spanish painting in criticising a work by Rossini, the "Pasticcio": "There is something sinister to me about his 'Pasticcio,' to begin with, suggesting Saint Hieronymus in the Spanish Gallery, writing psalms as a corpse. It gives one a chill, like the touching of a statue." —*Transl.*

the Arethusan spring, whose waters preserved their original sweetness, though they traversed the bitter floods of the sea, so Rossini's heart has retained its melodic loveliness and sweetness, although it has tasted in ample measure all the world's goblets of wormwood.

As I have said, the great master's "Stabat" has been the predominant musical event of this year. As regards the first performance, which served as a model, I need make no report; sufficient to say that the Italians sang. The hall of the Italian Opera seemed to be the ante-court of heaven; there the nightingales of holiness sobbed, and there flowed the most fashionable of tears. The *France Musicale* also presented the greater part of the "Stabat" in its concerts, and, it goes without saying, with tremendous applause. At these concerts we also heard the "Paulus" of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and it was, in fact, owing to this proximity that he aroused our attention, and called forth the comparison with Rossini. As regards the great public this comparison did not redound to the credit of our young countryman; in fact, it is as if one tried to compare the Templover Berg near Berlin with the Apennines of Italy. Yet despite this the Templover Berg has its merits, and wins the respect of the great mass owing to the sole fact that it bears a cross on its summit.¹ "Under this sign you shall conquer!" Not, of course, in France, the land of unbelief, where Mendelssohn has always been a failure. He was the season's lamb of sacrifice, while Rossini was its musical lion, whose sweet roaring still continues to sound. It is said here that Felix Mendelssohn will come personally to Paris these days. This much is certain, that by means of high intervention and diplomatic efforts M. Léon Pillet has been induced to let M. Scribe put together a libretto, which M. Mendelssohn will set to music for the Grand Opéra. Will our young compatriot be successful in this venture? I cannot tell. His artistic talent is great, yet it has its very ominous limits and gaps. With regard to talent I find a great resemblance between M. Felix Mendelssohn and Mlle. Rachel Felix, the tragic artist. They have in common a great, austere, and very earnest seriousness, they lean decidedly, well-nigh obtrusively on classic models, they have the most sensitive, most clever powers of calculation, sharpness of intellect and, finally, an entire absence of *naïveté*. But is there such a thing as genial originality in art without *naïveté*? Thus far there is no case on record.

MUSICAL SEASON OF 1843

FIRST REPORT

Paris, March 20, 1843.

The boredom which French classic tragedy exhales was never better grasped than by the good *bourgeoise* of Louis XVth's day, who said to her children: "Do not envy the aristocracy, and forgive it its arrogance, for it is the punishment of heaven that it has to go to the *Théâtre Français* every evening and be bored to death!" The old *régime* has ceased to exist, and the sceptre has passed into the hands of the *bourgeoisie*; but these new rulers must also have many sins for which to atone, and the ill will of the gods strikes them even more mercilessly

¹"A certificate of baptism is a ticket of admission to European culture," says Heine, in his "Thoughts and Fancies."—*Transl.*

than their predecessors in the realm; not alone does Mlle. Rachel offer them the mouldy dregs of the antique sleeping draught every evening, but they now must also swallow the garbage of their own romantic kitchen, versified sauerkraut, Victor Hugo's "Les Bourgraves." I shall waste no words on the value of this indigestible and clumsy piece of work, which enters on the scene with all sorts of pretensions, especially historic ones; although Hugo's knowledge respecting the epoch and scene of action of his play is gathered solely from the French translation of Schreiber's "Guidebook for Travellers on the Rhine." Has the man who a year ago, at a public session of the *Académie*, dared to say that German genius had come to an end (*la pensée allemande est rentrée dans l'ombre*), has this greatest eagle of poesy really over-soared his contemporaries so supremely on this occasion? In truth, not at all. His work betrays neither poetic fulness nor harmony, neither enthusiasm nor freedom of spirit; it shows not a spark of geniality, but only stilted unnaturalness and glaring declamation. It offers acutely angular wooden figures, overloaded with tasteless spangles, moved by visible wires, a sinister play of puppets, a gross spasmodic aping of life; a passion which is an out and out lie. Nothing seems more fatal to me than this Hugoian passion, which demeans itself so glowingly, outwardly flames up in so splendid a manner, and yet within is so wretchedly sober and frosty. This chill passion which is dished up to us in such flaming figures of speech, always reminds me of the baked ice which the Chinese know how to prepare with such art, by holding little bits of *frappé*, wrapped in a thin dough, over the fire for a few moments; an antithetic dainty, which must be swallowed quickly, burning lips and tongue with its hot rind, while chilling the stomach.

But the ruling *bourgeoisie*, for its sins, does not alone have to endure old classic tragedies and trilogies which are not classic, but the heavenly powers have bestowed upon it a still more horrible artistic delight, namely, the pianoforte, which it is now impossible to avoid anywhere; which one hears sounding in every house, day and night. Yes, pianoforte is the name of that instrument of torture wherewith present high society is most especially tormented and chastised for all its usurpations. If only the innocent did not have to suffer with the guilty! This eternal playing is no longer to be endured. (Alas, wall-neighbors of mine, young daughters of Albion, are playing a brilliant piece for two left hands at this very moment!) These blatantly jingling tones, which do not die away naturally, these heartless whirring notes, this archprosaic pounding and picking, this *fortepiano* kills all thought and feeling and we grow stupid, obtuse and imbecile. This growing supremacy of piano playing and even the triumphal progresses of the artists are characteristic of our time, and really denote the triumph of machinery over mind. Technical agility, the precision of an automaton, the identification with the stringed wood, the sounding instrumentalization of the human being, are now praised and celebrated as the loftiest of aims. Like swarms of grasshoppers the virtuosos come to Paris every winter, less to earn money than to make a name for themselves here, one which will all the more easily procure a pecuniary harvest for them in other lands. Paris serves them for a species of billboard, where their fame may be read in giant letters. I say "their fame may

be read," since it is the Parisian press which announces it to the credulous world, and these virtuosos display the greatest virtuosity in the exploitation of journals and journalists. They even get the better of the hard of hearing, for all men are human, are susceptible to flattery, and like to play the part of a patron, and one hand washes the other; the dirtiest one, however, is seldom that of the journalist, and even the purchasable flatterer is at the same time a fool deceived, who receives half his pay in endearments. People speak of the venality of the press: they are much mistaken. On the contrary, the press is generally duped, and this is especially the case where the famous virtuosos are concerned. All of them are really famous, particularly in the laudations which they personally, or their brothers or their lady mothers, get into print. It is unbelievable how humbly they will beg in the newspaper offices for the least little alms of praise, how they will writhe and twist. While I was still high in favor with the manager of the *Gazette musicale* (alas, my youthful levity caused a revulsion!), I could see plainly, with my own eyes, how these famous ones lay obsequiously at his feet, and crawled and wagged their tails in order to secure a little praise in his journal. And of these highly-famed virtuosos of ours, who allow homage to be paid them in all the capitals of Europe like reigning princes, it might be said after the manner of Béranger, that the dust of Maurice Schlesinger's boots is still visible on their crowns of laurel. How these persons speculate on our credulousness is past belief, unless one can observe their activities here on the spot. In the office of the aforementioned publication, I once encountered a ragged old man who announced himself as the father of a celebrated virtuoso, and begged the editors of the journal to publish a notice of his son, in which some noble traits of his life as an artist were brought to the public's attention. It seems that the celebrity had given a concert somewhere in Southern France with tremendous applause, and dedicated the proceeds to an ancient Gothic cathedral which threatened to tumble down; on another occasion he had played for an inundated widow woman, or for a seventy-year-old school-master, who had lost his only cow, and so forth. In the course of an extended conversation with the father of this benefactor of mankind, the old man admitted quite naïvely that it was true his fine son did not do much for him, although he was well able to, and that sometimes he even let him starve a bit. I should like to advise the celebrity to give a concert some day for the benefit of his old father's tumble-down trousers also.

When one witnesses this wretched state of affairs, it is really impossible to nurse a grudge against the Swedish students, who expressed themselves somewhat too strongly against the scandal of this virtuoso-idolatry, and prepared the well-known ovation for Ole Bull upon his arrival at Upsala. The celebrity was already under the impression that his carriage-horses would be unhitched, was prepared for a torch-light procession and wreaths of flowers, when he received a totally unexpected thrashing of honor, a truly Norse surprise.

The matadors of this year's season were Sivori and Dreyschock. The former is a violinist, and on this account alone I place him above the latter, the terrible piano-beater. In the case of the violinist, in any event, virtuosity is not purely and solely the result of mechanical

finger dexterity and mere technic, as with the pianist. The violin is an instrument which is almost human in its moods, and which stands in a relation of sympathy with the moods of the player; the slightest unease, the faintest emotional shock, a breath of feeling, here finds its immediate echo, and is caused, no doubt, by the fact that the violin, pressed so close to our breast, can hear the beating of our heart. This is the case, however, only with artists who really have a soul. The more matter of fact and heartless a violinist is the more monotonous will be his execution, and he can rely upon the obedience of his violin at every hour, in every place. Yet this lauded sureness is no more than the result of intellectual narrowness, and it is just the greatest masters whose playing has not infrequently depended on external and inner influences. I have never heard anyone play better than Paganini, and, at times, I have never heard anyone play worse, and I can say the same of Ernst. The latter, perhaps the greatest violinist of our day, resembles Paganini in his failings as in his genius. Ernst's absence here this winter was greatly regretted by all music-lovers who know how to esteem the heights in art. Signor Sivori was but a weak substitute, yet we listened to him with great pleasure. Since he was born in Genoa, and as a child, perhaps, encountered Paganini at times in the narrow streets of his native town, where two people cannot get out of each other's way, he has here been proclaimed a pupil of Paganini. No, Paganini never had a pupil, could not have one, for the best that he knew, which is the highest in art, may neither be taught nor learned!

What is the highest in art? That which is also the highest in all other manifestations of life: self-conscious freedom of spirit. Not alone a musical composition which has been composed in the fulness of this self-consciousness, but even its mere presentation may be regarded as what is artistically highest, if we feel that it projects to us that miraculous breath of eternity directly betokening that the interpreter stands on the same spiritual plane as the composer, that he, too, is a free soul. Yes, this individual consciousness of freedom in art manifests itself quite particularly in treatment, in form, and in no case through the material, and we may, on the contrary, affirm that the artists who select freedom itself and liberation as their subjects, are usually limited and fettered in spirit—as a matter of fact, are helots. This reflection is borne out at the present day, especially in German poetry, when we realize with horror that the most daringly unfettered singers of freedom, when the light is turned on them, reveal themselves in most cases as narrow-minded natures, Philistines whose night-cap peeps forth beneath their red liberty bonnet, ephemerids of whom Goethe would say:

Matte Fliegen! Wie sie rasen!
Wie sie, sumsend überkeck,
Ihren kleinen Fliegendreck
Träufeln auf Tyrannennasen.

(Feeble May-flies! Lo, how frantic!
Impudently buzzing, antic,
They their fly-dirt, little mess-pots,
Drip on noses proud of despots!)

The poets who were truly great have always interpreted the great questions of interest of their time elsewhere than in rhymed newspaper articles, and have paid but slight attention when the slavish mass, whose rudeness disgusted them, reproached them with being aristocrats.

SECOND REPORT

Paris, March 26, 1843.

I have mentioned Messers Sivori and Dreyschock as the most remarkable figures of the present season. The latter earned the greater meed of applause, and I faithfully report that public opinion proclaims him to be one of the greatest piano virtuosos, and places him on a par with the most famous among them. He makes a hellish racket. One does not seem to hear one pianist Dreyschock, but three "schocks" of pianists.¹ Since on the evening of his concert the wind was blowing south by west, perhaps you heard the tremendous sounds in Augsburg; at such a distance their effect must be agreeable. Here, however, in the Department of the Seine, one may easily burst an ear-drum when this piano-pounder thumps away. Go hang yourself, Franz Liszt, you are but an ordinary wind-god in comparison with this god of thunder, who bundles the storms together into a switch and flogs the ocean with it! A Dane, too, by name of Villmers, has been heard here this winter, with success, and is sure, in the course of time, to strum his way to the highest degrees of his art. The older pianists step more and more into the background, and these poor, decrepit invalids of fame are obliged to suffer severely for their overrated youth. Only Kalkbrenner holds his own in a measure. He appeared again in public this winter, at the concert of one of his pupils; on his lips there still gleamed that embalmed smile which we recently noticed on those of an Egyptian Pharaoh, when his mummy was unwrapped in the museum here. After an absence of more than twenty-five years, Kalkbrenner also revisited the scene of his earliest successes, that is to say, London, and earned the greatest applause there. The best is that he has returned safely to his Paris.²

And now it will really no longer be necessary for us to lend credence to the secret report that founded M. Kalkbrenner's long

¹A pun on the German word "Schock," meaning threescore.—*Ed.*

²In the French edition the following reads: "... and that his presence in Paris refutes all the sinister and calumnious reports circulated about him. He has returned safely, his pockets full of guineas and his head emptier than ever. He comes back in triumph, and tells us how delighted Her Majesty, the Queen of England, was to see him in such good health, and how flattered she was by his visit to Windsor or to some other castle whose name I do not remember. Yes, the great Kalkbrenner has returned safely to his Paris residence, to his admirers, to his fine pianofortes, which he manufactures together with M. Pleyel, to his numerous pupils, who include all the artists with whom he has ever exchanged a word in his life, and to his collection of paintings, which, he declares, no prince could afford to buy. It goes without saying that he has here once more found the little eight-year-old boy whom he calls son, and whom he credits with even greater musical talents than he himself possesses, ranking him higher than Mozart. This lymphatic, unhealthily puffed-up little man, whose modesty, at all events, already exceeds that of his father, listens to his own praise with the most unshakable coolness; and with the air of a bored ancient, weary of the world, he himself recounts his successes at court, where the beautiful princesses kissed his little white hand. The arrogance of this little creature, this bored fœtus, is as repulsive as it is comical. I do not know whether M. Kalkbrenner also rediscovered the worthy fishwife in Paris, who once resigned the famous turbot to him, etc.—*Transl.*

avoidance of England on that country's unhealthy code of laws, which punishes the galant crime of bigamy with strangulation. We may therefore take for granted that this report was a calumny, for it is a fact that M. Kalkbrenner has returned to his admirers here, to the fine pianofortes, which he manufactures together with M. Pleyel, to his female pupils, who are all trained to be his mistresses in the French sense of the word, to his picture-gallery, which, he declares, no prince could afford to buy, to his hopeful son, who already excels his father in modesty, and to the worthy fishwife, who resigned to him the famous turbot which the chief cook of the Prince of Benevent, Tallyrand-Perigord, erstwhile Bishop of Autun, had already ordered for his master. The fishwife struggled for some time before resigning the said turbot to the famous pianist, who had gone to the fish-market incognito, but when he drew forth his card and laid it down on the fish, and the poor woman read the name "Kalkbrenner," she at once ordered that the turbot be taken to his home, and for a long time could not be induced to accept any payment, overpaid as she was by the great honor shown her. Some poor German fish are angered by a fish-story of this kind, because they themselves are unable to play up their self-consciousness in such a brilliant fashion, and because, in addition, they envy M. Kalkbrenner his elegant external appearance, his delicate polished manners, his smoothness and sweetness, his whole marchpane presence, which, however, receives a somewhat shabby addition for the observer owing to many involuntary Berlinisms of the lowest class, so that Koreff could say of the man, quite as wittily as correctly: "He looks like a bonbon that has fallen into the mud!"

A contemporary of M. Kalkbrenner is M. Pixis, and although he is of a lower order, we will mention him here as a curiosity. But is M. Pixis really still alive? He himself declares that he is and calls on M. Sina, the famous bathing-guest of Boulogne, who must not be confused with Mount Sinai, to witness the fact. We will take the word of this brave dominator of the waves, although many evil tongues even assert that M. Pixis never existed. No, the latter is a human being who is actually living; I say "human being," though a zoölogist would give him a more tailful name. M. Pixis came to Paris at the time of the Invasion, at the moment when the Apollo of the Belvidere was given back to the Romans, and obliged to leave Paris. The acquisition of M. Pixis was to console the French in a measure. He played piano, also composed very nicely, and his little musical numbers were especially valued by the bird-dealers who train canaries to sing to the barrel-organ. It was only necessary to grind out a composition by M. Pixis to these yellow creatures once. They understood it immediately, and twittered it, so that it was a real joy, and everyone applauded: "Pixissime!" Since the older Bourbons have withdrawn from the scene of action, one no longer cries "Pixissime!" the new song-birds demand new melodies.¹ By means of his external appearance, his physique, M. Pixis still

¹The close of this section, afterward altered by Heine, reads originally as follows: " . . . and like Kalkbrenner, Pixis, too, is also a poor mummy, in fact the mummy of an ibis. The ibis' long beak, in truth, offers the greatest resemblance to that fabulously long Pixine nose, which was one of the curiosities of the musical world, and the target for so many cheap jokes; I had to allude to it for once in this connection.

—*Transl.*

imposes to some extent; he has, for a fact, the largest nose in the world of music, and in order to make this specialty as noticeable as possible, he often appears in company with a composer of romances, who has no nose at all, and for that reason recently was awarded the order of the Legion of Honor, for it is certain that M. Panseron could not have received the decoration for his music. It is said that he is also to be appointed director of the Grand Opéra, since he is the only person whom one need not fear Maestro Giacomo Meyerbeer's leading around by the nose.

M. Herz, like Kalkbrenner and Pixis, is one of the mummies. He now shines only by reason of his handsome concert-hall, but is long since dead, and even married recently. Among the pianists residing in Paris who have had the greatest success, are Hallé and Eduard Wolf; yet we will notice only the latter, because he has at the same time distinguished himself as a composer. Eduard Wolf is fecund and full of verve and originality. His studies for the piano are most praised, and he is quite the vogue now. Stephen Heller is more a composer than a virtuoso, although he is highly esteemed because of his piano playing. His musical productions all carry the hall-mark of an admirable talent, and he is already accounted one of the great masters. He is a true artist, without affectation or exaggeration; showing the sense for the romantic in classic form. Thalberg has been in Paris for the past two months, but will give no concerts himself, and will play in public only at a friend's concert this week. This artist differentiates himself favorably from his pianistic colleagues, one might almost say, by his musical good manners.¹ As in his life, so in his art, Thalberg demonstrates his born tact, his interpretation is so gentlemanly, so opulent, so decent, so entirely without grimace, so absolutely exempt from forced geniality, so altogether lacking in that advertising hooliganism which poorly conceals inward lack of spirit, which we so often notice in the case of our musical fools for luck. Healthy women like him. Sickly women like him no less, although he does not appeal to their pity by epileptic attacks at the piano, although he does not speculate on their delicate, over-excited nervous systems, although he neither electricizes nor galvanizes them; negative qualities, yet fine ones. There is only one other whom I would prefer to him. That is Chopin, who, however, is far more the composer than the virtuoso. In Chopin's case I forget mastery in piano playing altogether, and sink into the sweet abysses of his music, in the painful loveliness of his creations, as delicate as they are profound. Chopin is the great, genial tone-poet, whom one should really name only in company with Mozart, Beethoven or Rossini.

There has been no lack of novelties this winter in the so-called lyric theatres. The *Bouffes* gave us "Don Pasquale," a new opus by Signor Donizetti, the musical Raupach. This Italian, too, does not fail of success, his talent is great, his prolificacy, however, is greater, and only surpassed by that of the rabbits. At the Opéra-Comique we saw "La part du diable," text by Scribe, music by Auber; poet and

¹In the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* we read, instead of the preceding sentence: "Despite my distaste for the piano, I shall still endeavor to hear it. This has a specific connection, however, with the tolerance I reserve for Thalberg. He enchants me—I might almost say, by his musical good manners—his playing is altogether dipped in harmony."—*Transl.*

composer fit well together in this case, they have a remarkable resemblance in their merits as in their defects. Both have much wit, much grace, much invention, even passion; and the one lacks only poetry while the other lacks only music. The work finds a public and always fills the house.

In the *Académie royale de musique*, at the Grand Opéra, they have given "Charles VI" these days, text by Casimir Delavigne, music by Halévy. Here too, I noticed an affinity between poet and composer. Both have known how to elevate their natural gifts by means of noble, conscientious effort, and have developed rather by external scholastic training than through inner originality. For this reason neither of them has ever altogether surrendered to what is unworthy, as sometimes happens in the case of the original genius. They always produce something satisfactory, something fine, something respectable, academic, classic. Both are at the same time noble natures, worthy persons, and at a time when gold hides itself in miserly fashion, we will not condemn and find fault with the silver which is current. "Der fliegende Holländer," by Dietz, has since been sadly shipwrecked. I have not heard this opera, and only saw the libretto, and noticed with annoyance that the beautiful legend, which a well-known German writer (H. Heine) had planned out almost word by word for the stage, had been botched in the French text.

Meyerbeer's "Le Prophète" is still expected, and that with an impatience which, stimulated in the most insufferable manner, might in the end turn into a fatal dislike. As it is, a strange reaction against Meyerbeer is taking shape here, for in Paris they cannot forgive him the favor so graciously shown him in Berlin. People are unjust enough to make him suffer for many political worries. Necessitous talents, who are dependent for their existence on the favor of the All-Highest, find their servility far more easily excused than the great master, who was born into the world with a grandiose fortune, a fortune genial in itself. In fact he has laid himself open to very serious misunderstandings; perhaps we shall revert to them before long. Berlioz's absence makes itself felt. We hope that on his return he will bring us much that is beautiful; Germany will surely inspire him, just as he, too, must have inspired spirits beyond the Rhine. He is unquestionably the greatest and most original musician whom France has produced in recent times; he ranges above all his French compatriots.

As a conscientious informant I must mention that among my German countrymen who are now in Paris, must be numbered the admirable master Konradin Kreutzer. Konradin Kreutzer has gained considerable fame here through his "Nachtlager von Granada," which the German troupe, of starved memory, presented in this city. I have known the honored master since the earliest days of my youth, when his songs delighted me; to this very day they sound on in my memory like singing forests, with sobbing nightingales and blossoming spring-tide air. Kreutzer told me that he expected to set a libretto to music for the Opéra-Comique. May he succeed in not stumbling in this dangerous road, and avoid being deceived by the artful *roués* of the Paris world of comedy, as has happened to so many Germans before him, who even had the advantage of possessing less talent than M. Kreutzer,

and at any rate were able to move on the smooth ground of Paris with lighter step than he. What sad experiences did not Richard Wagner have to make, until finally, obeying the dictates of common sense and of hunger, he wisely gave up the dangerous project of obtaining a foothold on the French stage, and fluttered back to the German land of the potato. More advantageously equipped, both in the material and the industrial sense, is old Dessauer, who, as he claims, is composing an opera at the behest of the management of the Opéra-Comique. M. Scribe has furnished him with the text, and a local bank has guaranteed in advance, that in the event of a failure on the part of old Dessauer, he, the celebrated librettist, will have a notable sum paid him as an abatement or compensation. He is right, in fact, in looking ahead, since old Dessauer, as he daily whimpers to us, is suffering from melancholia. But who is this old Dessauer? It cannot be the old Dessauer who won so many laurels in the Seven Years' War, and whose march has become so celebrated, and whose statue stood in the Berlin *Schlossgarten*, and has since tumbled down? No, dear reader. The Dessauer of whom we speak has never won a laurel, nor did he write any celebrated marches, nor yet was there a statue erected to him, which fell down. He is not the Prussian old Dessauer, and this name is only a *nom de guerre* or, perhaps, a nickname, given him because of his elderly, felinely humped and crooked and scarred appearance. He is an old youth, but not well preserved. He does not hail from Dessau, but, on the contrary, comes from Prague, where he owns two large, clean houses in the Hebrew quarter; he is also said to own a house in Vienna, and, in general, to be very well-to-do. So he does not have to compose, as old Madame Mosson, the great Giacomo Meyerbeer's mother-in-law, would say. But because of his preference for art he neglected his business enterprises, made music and early composed an opera¹ which, owing to noble insistence, was produced, and had one and a half performances. As in Prague, old Dessauer also tried to make his talents count in Vienna, but the clique which enthuses for Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert would not let him rise; he was misunderstood, which, owing to the gibberish he spoke, and a certain nasal pronunciation of German, suggesting rotten eggs, was very explicable. Or, perhaps, he was understood, and just on that account no one wished to have anything to do with him. At the same time he suffered from hæmorrhoids and a urinary complaint, and, as he expressed it, he contracted the *melancholic*. In order to cheer up he went to Paris, and here won the favor of the celebrated Moritz Schlesinger, who published his song compositions, and gave him a gold watch as an honorarium. When old Dessauer hunted up his patron after a while, and informed him that the watch did not go, the latter replied: "Go? Did I say that it would go? Do your compositions go? I have the same experience with your compositions that you have with my watch—they do not go!" Thus spake the ruler of musicians, Moritz Schlesinger, as he pulled up the collar of his cravat and fussed with his neckwear, as was his custom when he grew enraged; for like all great men he is very passionate. This sinister plucking and pulling at his neckwear often, so it is said, precedes the most serious outbreaks of rage, and poor old

¹"which was called 'The Visit to Saint-Cyr,' and which, owing to noble insistence, etc."—this sentence reads in the original manuscript.—*Transl.*

Dessauer was so affected thereby that from that day on he has suffered more than ever from *melancholic*. His noble patron wronged him. It is not his fault that his songs do not go; he has done all that is possible to get them to go, has been on his feet from morning to night on their account, and pursues everyone who might be in a position to induce his songs to go by means of an advertisement in some paper. He is a burr on every journalist's coat, and continually laments to us about his *melancholic*, and how some little crumb of praise would gladden his sick mind. Less prosperous journalists, who work on the minor papers, he tries to cajole in another manner; for instance, he will tell them how, recently, he treated the editor of one paper to a breakfast in the Café de Paris which cost forty-five francs, ten sous; He actually carries the bill, the *carte payante* of the said meal, about with him in his trousers' pocket, in order to produce it in confirmation. Yes, the angry Schlesinger does old Dessauer an injustice when he thinks that the latter does not employ every means to get his compositions to go. Not alone the male, but the female goose-quills as well does the pitiable old chap try to set in movement to that end. He has even found an old goose of the Fatherland who, moved by pity, has written a few eulogistic advertisements in the flattest of sentimental German-French for him, and, so to speak, has endeavored to soothe his *melancholic* by means of a printed balsam. We must praise this worthy person all the more highly, since she was moved only by purest humanity, by philanthropy, as old Dessauer would find it hard to bribe any woman with his handsome face. As regards this face, opinions differ: some say it is a vomitive, others, a laxative. One thing is certain, that when I see it I am always caught in a fatal dilemma, and then cannot decide which of the two points of view I should choose.¹ Old Dessauer wanted to show the public here that his face was not, as has been claimed, the most deadly in the world. To this end he has had his younger brother come here expressly, from Prague, and this handsome youth, who looks like an Adonis de Grindes [an Adonis of Scurvy] now accompanies him everywhere in Paris.

Pardon me, dear reader, if I talk to you of such carrion flies; their insistent buzzing at length drives the most patient to take up the fly-swatter. And then, too, I wished to show here the sort of tumble-bugs our worthy music-publishers crack up as German nightingales, as the successors, aye, even the rivals, of Schubert. Schubert's popularity is very great in Paris, and his name is exploited in the most shameless fashion. The most wretched rot in the shape of songs appears under the fictitious name of Camille Schubert, and the French, who quite certainly do not know that the Christian name of the real musician is Franz, are thus deceived. Poor Schubert! And to think of the texts foisted on his music! It is notably the songs of Heinrich Heine which Schubert has composed, that are most popular here; but the texts have been so horribly translated, that the poet was heartily glad when he learned how little it weighed on the music-publishers' conscience to suppress the name of the real author, and to place the name of some

¹The conclusion of this period is missing in the French edition. The name "Dessauer" is there changed to "de Sauer," with regard to which Heine writes as follows: "I must remark, however, that I have written the name of the musician of whom I have this moment been speaking, incorrectly, and that beyond a doubt his name is the same as that of old Dessauer, the celebrated composer of the Dessauer march, etc."—*Transl.*

obscure French word-smith on the title-page of the songs in question. Perhaps this was done shrewdly, in order not to suggest any author's rights. Here in France the publishers always allow the poet of the songs which had been set half of the honorarium. Had this fashion been introduced in Germany, a poet whose *Buch der Lieder* has been exploited for the past twenty years by all the German music-publishers, would at least have been given a word of thanks by these people. But of the many hundred compositions set to his songs which have appeared in Germany, he has not received a single complimentary copy. May the hour strike some day, for Germany as well, when the intellectual property of the author is just as seriously recognized as the cotton property of the manufacture of night-caps! Poets, however, in our country, are looked upon as nightingales, to whom the air alone belongs; they are without rights, and "free as the bird" in the true sense of the phrase.

I will conclude this article with a kind deed. As I am informed, M. Schindler in Cologne, where he is a musical conductor, is greatly grieved because I spoke slightly of his white cravat, and as regards himself, have declared that on his visiting-card, beneath his name, one might read the addition, *L'Ami de Beethoven*. The latter fact he denies. With respect to the cravat, what was said was entirely correct; and I have never seen a monster more horribly white and stiff; yet as regards the card, I am constrained by my love for humankind to admit that I myself doubt whether these words were really engraved upon it. I did not invent the tale, but, perhaps, gave it too ready a credence, as is the case with all things in this world, where we pay more attention to plausibility than to the actual truth. The story itself shows that the man was held capable of such a piece of foolishness, and gives us the real measure of his personality, whereas an actual fact in itself alone could be no more than a chance, without any characteristic meaning. I have not seen the card in question; on the other hand I did see, lately, with my own eyes, the visiting-card of a poor Italian singer, who had had the words "M. Rubini's nephew," printed beneath his name!

MUSICAL SEASON OF 1844

Paris, April 25, 1844.

A tout seigneur tout honneur. To-day we begin with Berlioz, whose first concert has opened the musical season, and may be regarded as its overture. The compositions, more or less new, which were presented to the public received the applause due them, and even the most indolent souls were carried away by the power of genius which reveals itself in all this great master's creations. His beat of pinion is one which betrays that he is no common song-bird. He is a colossal nightingale, a nightingale of eagle size, such as are said to have existed in the primal world. Indeed, Berlioz's music has something primeval, if not antediluvian, for me, and suggests vanished races of beasts, fabulous kingdoms and sins, heaped-up impossibilities, Babylon, the hanging gardens of Semiramis, Niniveh, and the miracles of Mizraim, as we see them in the paintings of the Englishman Martin. In fact, if we seek an analogy in the art of painting, we find the greatest affinity between Berlioz and this mad Briton, the same feeling for the monstrous, the gigantic, the materially immeasurable. In the case of the one, crying

light and shade effects; in that of the other, shrilling instrumentation; the one has but little melody, the other but little color; both have but little beauty and no sentiment. Their works are neither antique nor romantic, they suggest neither Greece nor the Catholic Middle Ages, but hark much farther back, to the period of Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian architecture, and the massed passions which expressed themselves therein.

What a normal modern human being, on the other hand, is our Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, our celebrated compatriot, whom we mention first of all to-day because of his symphony, which was given in the concert-hall of the *Conservatoire*. We owe this pleasure to the active zeal of his friends and patrons in this city. Although this symphony of Mendelssohn was accorded a very frosty reception at the *Conservatoire*, it deserves the recognition of all true connoisseurs. It is truly beautiful and one of Mendelssohn's best works.¹ Yet how is it that since the performance of "Paulus," which was offered the public here, no laurel wreath will grow on French soil for this meritorious and highly deserving artist? How is it that all his efforts here are vain, and that the last desperate attempt of the Odéon Theatre, the performance of the choruses from "Antigone," also resulted wretchedly? Mendelssohn always affords us an opportunity of meditating on the loftiest æsthetic problems. In fact, he always recalls to our mind that great question: What is the difference between art and falsehood? In the case of this master we admire, first of all, his great talent for form, for stylization, his gift of appropriating the extraordinary, his delightfully beautiful workmanship, his keen ear of a lizard, his delicate feelers, and his serious, I might also say impassioned, indifference. If we try to find an analogous figure in a sister art, we discover one on this occasion among the poets, and his name is Ludwig Tieck. This master also had the gift of always reproducing something admirable, be it whether he wrote or read; he even knew how to play the naïve, and yet he never created anything which compelled the multitude and lived on in its heart.²

In addition to the Mendelssohn Symphony we listened with great interest to a symphony by the late Mozart at the *Conservatoire*, and a composition by Händel quite as full of talent. They were received with great applause. Both Mozart and Händel have finally succeeded in attracting the attention of the French, something which took a good deal of time, since no propaganda of diplomats, pietists and bankers was active in their behalf.

¹In the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* Heine goes more into detail: "The second movement, Scherzo in F Major, and the third Adagio, in A Major, in particular, are full of character and at times really beautiful. The instrumentation is admirable, and the whole symphony is one of Mendelssohn's best works."—*Transl.*

²The conclusion of this paragraph, in the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, reads: "Both have in common the most burning wish to accomplish something in the dramatic field, and Mendelssohn, too, may perhaps grow old and scorned, without having succeeded in getting anything truly great on the stage. No doubt but that he will try to do so; yet he is bound to fail, since there truth and passion are first of all in demand. The more talented Mendelssohn might have more success in creating something lasting, but not in that field where truth and passion are called for, that of the stage; and Ludwig Tieck, despite his hot desire, was never able to rise to a dramatic achievement."—*Transl.*

Our admirable compatriot Ferdinand Hiller is too highly regarded by genuine lovers of art to prevent us—for all the greatness of the names we have this moment mentioned—from specifying him as one of the composers whose works were duly appreciated at the *Conservatoire*. Hiller is a musician who thinks rather than feels, and in addition he is reproached with being too learned. Intellect and science may at times exert a somewhat chilling effect in the compositions of this doctrinarian; but, at all events, they are always attractive, charming and lovely. There is not a trace of wry-mouthed excentricity in them. Hiller is artistically a relative of his countryman, Wolfgang Goethe. Hiller, too, was born in Frankfurt, where I saw his ancestral home when last I passed through the city: it is called “at the Green Frog,” and an image of a frog is to be seen above the door. Hiller’s compositions never suggest such an unmusical beast, however, but only nightingales, larks, and such feathered creatures of the springtide.

There has been no lack of concert-giving pianists this year, either. The Ides of March in particular were critical days in this connection. Everyone was thumping away and wanting to be heard, if only for appearances’ sake, in order to be able to act like a great celebrity—on the other side of the Paris barriers. The odds and ends of feuilleton praise which the artists have begged or sneaked together, these disciples of art, in Germany especially, know how to exploit to advantage, and in the advertisements there we are told how that famous genius, the great Rudolf W., has arrived, the rival of Liszt and Thalberg, the hero of the keyboard who attracted such attention in Paris, and was even praised by Jules Janin, the critic. Hosannah! Of course, anyone who has seen some poor ephemerid of this kind, and knows in addition the slight attention paid far more important personages, finds the credulity of the public most entertaining, and the clumsy shamelessness of the virtuosos most disgusting. The evil is deeper-rooted, however, in the condition of our daily press, and this, again, is the result of conditions still more fatal. I must hark back again and again to the fact that there are but three pianists: Chopin, the gracious tone-poet, who, unfortunately, has been very ill this winter and not much seen; then Thalberg, the gentleman of music, who, in the end, does not need to play piano at all, in order to be greeted everywhere as a pleasant sight, and who really seems to regard his talent as no more than an appanage; and finally, our Liszt, who, in spite of all his perversities and wounding angles, still remains our cherished Liszt, and at this moment is once more exciting the Paris world of beauty. Yes, he is here, the great agitator, our Franz Liszt, the wandering knight of all sorts of orders (with the exception of that of the French Legion of Honor, which Louis Philippe will give to no virtuoso). He, the Hohenzollern-Hechingen court-counsellor, the doctor of philosophy, and thaumaturge doctor of music, the ever newly-risen Ratcatcher of Hameln, the new Faust, who is always followed by a poodle in the shape of Belloni, the ennobled and nevertheless noble Liszt, he is here! He is here, the modern Amphion, who sets in movement the stones of the Cologne Minster with the sounds of his strings, so that they join themselves together, as once the walls of Thebes! He is here, the modern Homer, whom Germany, Hungary and France, the three greatest of countries, claim as their

child, while only seven small provincial cities laid claim to the singer of the Iliad! He is here, the Attila, the scourge of God of all Erard pianos, which tremble at the mere rumor of his approach, and who once more start, bleed and whimper beneath his hand, so that the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals ought to take pity on them! He is here, the mad, handsome, ugly, mysterious, fatal and at the same time very childlike child of his time, the gigantic dwarf, the raging Roland with the Hungarian sword of honor, the Franz Liszt who to-day is robustly healthy, and to-morrow once more ill, whose magic power conquers us, whose genius delights us, the genial fool whose madness turns our own sanity, and whom we are at all events doing the most loyal service in making public the great furore which he is exciting here! We establish without circumlocution the fact of his tremendous success; no matter how we may privately explain the fact and whether or no we accord or deny the celebrated virtuoso our personal applause. It can surely be a matter of indifference to him, since ours is but a single voice, and our authority with regard to tonal art of no special weight.

When formerly I heard of the fainting spells which broke out in Germany and specially in Berlin, when Liszt showed himself there, I shrugged my shoulders pityingly and thought: quiet sabbatarian Germany does not wish to lose the opportunity of getting the little necessary exercise permitted it. It wants to shake its drowsy limbs a bit, and my Abderites on the Spree like to tickle themselves into an enthusiasm allowed them, one following the example of the other in declaiming: "Armor, ruler of men and gods!" In their case, thought I, it is a matter of the spectacle for the spectacle's sake, regardless of what it may be called: George Herwegh, Saphir, Franz Liszt, or Fanny Ellsler. When Herwegh is forbidden, they cling to Franz Liszt, who is unobjectionable and does not compromise. Thus I regarded, thus I explained this Lisztomania, and looked on it as a sign of the politically unfree conditions existing beyond the Rhine. Yet I was mistaken, after all, and I did not notice it until last week, at the Italian Opera House, where Liszt gave his first concert, and gave it before an assemblage which one might truly term the flower of local society. At any rate, they were wide-awake Parisians, people familiar with the greatest figures of the present, who, more or less, had shared in the life of the great drama of their own time, among them many invalids of all the arts, the most wearied of men in fact, and women who were also very weary, having danced the polka throughout the winter, a multitude of bored and busy minds. This was truly no Germanically sentimental, sentimentalizing Berlin audience, before which Liszt played, quite alone, or rather, accompanied solely by his genius. And yet, how convulsively his mere appearance affected them! How boisterous was the applause which rang to meet him! Bouquets, too, were flung at his feet. It was an uplifting sight, to behold the triumphantor letting the bunches of flowers rain down on him with entire self-possession, and finally, with a gracious smile, thrusting a red camelia, which he drew from one of the bouquets, into his buttonhole. And he did this in the presence of some young soldiers who had just come out of Africa, where they had seen not flowers, but leaden bullets rain

on them, and whose breasts were decorated with the red camelias of their own heroic blood, without anyone, here or there, paying any special attention to it. Strange, thought I, these Parisians, who have seen Napoleon, who had to win one battle after another in order to hold their attention! Now they are acclaiming our Franz Liszt. And what an acclaim it was! A veritable insanity, one unheard of in the annals of furore! What is the reason of this phenomenon? The solution of this question belongs to the domain of pathology rather than that of æsthetics.¹ A physician, whose specialty is female diseases, and whom I asked to explain the magic our Liszt exerted upon his public, smiled in the strangest manner, and at the same time said all sorts of things about magnetism, galvanism, electricity, of the contagion of a close hall filled with countless wax lights and several hundred perfumed and perspiring human beings, of historical epilepsy, of the phenomenon of tickling, of musical cantherides, and other scabrous things, which, I believe, have reference to the mysteries of the *bona dea*. Perhaps the solution of the question is not buried in such adventurous depths, but floats on a very prosaic surface. It seems to me at times that all this sorcery may be explained by the fact that no one on earth knows so well how to organize his successes, or rather their *mise en scène*, as our Franz Liszt. In this art he is a genius, a Philadelphia, a Bosco, a Houdin, yes, a Meyerbeer! The most distinguished persons serve him gratis as his colleagues, and his hired enthusiasts are models of training. Popping champagne corks, and a reputation for prodigal generosity, trumpeted forth by the most reliable newspapers, lure recruits to him in every city. Nevertheless, it may be the case that our Franz Liszt is really by nature an easy spender, and free from miserliness where money is concerned—a shabby vice which sticks to many virtuosos, especially the Italians, and with which we even find the sweetly fluting Rubini afflicted, regarding whose avarice a very amusing anecdote is related. The celebrated singer, so it seems, had undertaken a concert tour with Franz Liszt at joint expense, the profits of the concerts, which were to be given in various cities, to be divided. The great pianist, who carries the general intendant of his celebrity, the aforementioned Belloni, about with him everywhere, referred all business arrangements to him on this occasion. But when Signor Belloni, once he had concluded his business management, handed in his bill, Rubini noticed with horror that among the expenses in common a notable sum was set down for laurel wreaths, bouquets of flowers, laudatory poems and various other ovational costs. The naïve singer had imagined that these signs of approval had been flung at him because of his beautiful voice. He at once flew into a great rage, and absolutely would not pay for the bouquets, among which there may have been the most costly camelias. If I were a musician this quarrel would offer me the best possible subject for a comic opera.

Yes, indeed, we must not examine too closely the homage which the famous virtuosos garner. After all, their day of vain celebrity is a

¹In the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* the end of this section reads: "The electrical action of a demoniac nature on a closely-crowded multitude, the infectious power of ecstasy, and, perhaps, the magnetism of music itself, this spiritual illness of the times, which vibrates in nearly all of us—these phenomena have never yet presented themselves to me in so clear and intimidating a manner as in Liszt's concert."—*Transl.*

very short one, and the hour soon strikes when the titan of tonal art may, perhaps, crumple into a town musician of very dwarfish stature, who, in the coffee-house which he frequents, tells the regular guests, on his word of honor, how bouquets of the most beautiful camelias were formerly flung at his feet, and how, once, two Hungarian countesses, in order to secure possession of his handkerchief, had cast themselves on the ground and fought until the blood ran. The day-long reputation of a virtuoso evaporates and dies away, empty, without a trace, like a camel's wind in the desert.

The transition from the lion to the rabbit is somewhat abrupt. Yet I cannot forbear mentioning the tamer piano players who distinguished themselves this season in this place. We cannot all of us be great prophets, and there must also be lesser prophets, twelve to the dozen. As the greatest among the lesser ones we might mention Theodore Döhler. His playing is nice, pretty, well-behaved, sensitive, and he has a manner all his own of striking the keys with no more than the bent finger-tips of his horizontally outstretched hand. After Döhler, Hallé deserves special mention among the lesser prophets: he is a Habakkuk whose merit is as modest as it is genuine. Nor can I fail to speak of Schad, who, perhaps, occupies the same place among the pianists which Jonah did among the prophets. May a whale never swallow him! A quite admirable concert was given by Antoine de Kontski, a young Pole of estimable talent, who also has already gained celebrity. Among the remarkable appearances of the season are the débuts of young Mathias, a talent of high rank. The older Pharaohs are overshadowed day by day, and sink into spiritless darkness.

As a conscientious observer, who must not only inform the world regarding new operas and concerts, but also must report respecting all other catastrophes of the musical world, I must speak of the numerous marriages which have broken out or which threaten to break therein. I am speaking of genuine, life-long, respectable marriages, not the wild dilettantism of marriage which forgoes the *maire*, with his tri-colored scarf, and the blessings of the church. *Chacun* is now seeking his *chacune*. The artists dance about on wooers' feet, and trill hymeneals. The violin becomes the brother-in-law of the flute: nor will the horn music be missing. One of the three most celebrated pianists, not long ago, married the daughter of the bass who, in every respect, is the greatest at the Italian Opera; the lady is handsome, attractive and intelligent. A few days ago we learned that another admirable pianist from Warsaw was entering upon holy matrimony, that he was venturing out on that open sea for which as yet no compass has been found.¹ Nevertheless, daring sailor, push off from land, and

¹In the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* the beginning of this section reads: "As a conscientious observer I must here mention the concerts with which the two musical journals, the *Gazette musicale* of Moritz Schlesinger and the *France musicale* of the Escudier brothers, delighted their subscribers. There we heard singers who were pretty and who yet sang well: Madame Sabatier, Mademoiselle Lia Duport, and Madame Castellan. Since these concerts were given *gratis*, the demands of the public were all the more exacting; but they were richly satisfied. With pleasure I am able to communicate the important news that the seven years' war between these two musical newspapers already mentioned and their editors has—God be praised!—come to an end. The noble contestants have joined their hands in a treaty of peace, and are now good friends. This friendship will endure, since it is founded on mutual esteem.

may no storm break your rudder! It is even said now that Panofka, the greatest of violinists, whom Breslau has sent to Paris, has married here; that this artist, experienced in the fiddle, has grown tired of his quiet bachelor state, and would essay the terrible, unknown beyond. We are living in an heroic age. Another virtuoso, also celebrated, has become engaged these days. Like Theseus, he has found an Ariadne who will guide him through the labyrinth of this life; she will not be wanting the yarn, since she is a seamstress.

The violinists are in America, and we have received the most entertaining accounts of the triumphal progresses of Ole Bull, the Lafayette of the puff, the advertising hero of two worlds. The manager of his successes had him arrested in Philadelphia, in order to compel him to pay the bill of costs of his ovations. The famous one paid, and now it can no longer be said that the blond Norseman, the genial fiddler, owes his fame to any one else. Here in Paris, in the meantime, we are listening to Sivori. Portia would say: "Since the good Lord declares he is a man, I will take him for such!" Perhaps some other time I may be able to overcome my distaste, and report on this fiddling emetic. Alexander Batta also gave a fine concert this year: he still weeps his little childish tears on the big violoncello. I might also take this opportunity to praise M. Semmelmann: he needs it.

Ernst was here; but, capricious, he did not wish to give a concert. He indulges himself in playing only at the homes of friends, and satisfying true art lovers. This artist is loved and esteemed here like few others. He deserves to be. He is Paganini's true successor, he inherited the magic fiddle with which the Genoese was able to move stones and even clouds. Paganini, who with a gentle stroke of his bow now led us to the sunniest heights, now bade us glance into the most horrible abysses, possessed, it is true, a more demoniac power; but his lights and shades were often too startling, his contrasts too cutting, and his grandiose natural sounds must in many cases be regarded as an artificial playing of wrong notes. Ernst is more harmonious, and the softer tints predominate in his playing. Yet he has a preference for the fantastic, as well as for the baroque, if not the scurrilous, and many of his compositions always remind me of the fairy comedies of Gozzi, and the most adventurous of masques, the "Venetian Carnival." The musical composition known by this name, and which Sivori has shamelessly pirated, is a most charming capriccio by Ernst. This lover of the fantastic, when he wishes, can also be purely poetic, and not long ago I heard a Nocturne of his which was, one might say, dissolved in beauty. One feels as though transported into an Italian moonlit night, with silent alleys of cypresses, shimmering white statues and dreamily splashing fountains. As is known, Ernst has handed in his resignation at Hanover, and is now no longer royal Hanoverian concert-master. Nor was that a suitable post for him. He would be far better fitted to conduct the chamber-music at the court

The project of a family alliance between the two great houses was no more than the idle invention of the smaller papers. Marriage, nothing less than marriage for life, is the question of the day in the world of art just now. Thalberg, not long ago, married the daughter of Lablache, an admirable, charming and intelligent lady. A few days ago we learned that our excellent Eduard Wolf was marrying, that he was venturing out on the open sea for which as yet no compass has been found."—*Transl.*

of some fairy queen, say that of the Fairy Morgane; there he would find the audience which would best understand him, and among it many noble lords as art-loving as fabulous, such as King Arthur, Dietrich of Bern, Ogier the Dane, and others. And what fine ladies would applaud him. The blonde Hanoverians are no doubt pretty, but still they are mere sheep compared with a Fairy Meliore, a Dame Abunde, with Queen Guinevere, the Lovely Melusina, and other celebrated women who reside at the court of Queen Morgane in Avalon. At this court (and at none other) we hope some day to meet this admirable artist, for we, too, have been promised a profitable appointment there.

SECOND REPORT

Paris, May 1, 1844.

The *Académie royale de la musique*, the so-called Grand Opéra, is situated, as we all know, in the Rue Lepelletier, about in the middle, just opposite the Paolo Broggi restaurant. Broggi is the name of an Italian who once upon a time was Rossini's cook. When the latter came to Paris last year, he also visited his former servant's *trattoria*, and after he had eaten there, remained standing before the door for a long time, regarding the great opera house in deep meditation. A tear came to his eye, and when someone asked him why he appeared to be moved to such melancholy, the great master replied that Paolo had prepared his favorite dish for him, *ravioli* with Parmesan cheese, exactly as he had in former days; but he had been able to eat only about half the portion, and that even this now weighed upon him. He, who had formerly possessed the stomach of an ostrich, could nowadays hardly eat as much as a turtledove in love.

We will leave it an open question, as to how successful the old jester was in mystifying his indiscreet interlocutor, and content ourselves for the nonce with advising every music-lover to eat a portion of *ravioli* at Broggi's, and afterwards also to stop for a moment before the door of the restaurant, to regard the home of grand opera. It is not distinguished by luxurious brilliancy; on the contrary, its exterior is that of a very respectable stable, and its roof is flat. On this roof stand eight great statues representing Muses. The ninth is missing, and alas! she is the Muse of music. The most curious explanations regarding the absence of this most worthy Muse are in circulation. Prosaic persons declare that a wind-storm cast her from the roof. Poetic minds, on the contrary, affirm that poor Polyhymnia flung herself down, in an attack of despair brought on by the wretched singing of Monsieur Duprez and Madame Stolz. That is quite possible; Duprez's broken, glassy voice has grown so discordant that no human being, let alone a Muse, could endure hearing it. If it continues, the other daughters of Mnemosyne will also fling themselves from the roof, and it will soon be dangerous to cross the Rue Lepelletier in the evening. As for the poor music which now has been raging here at the Grand Opéra for some time, I shall not say a word. Donizetti for the moment is the best of them, the Achilles. Hence it will be easy to form an idea of the lesser heroes. As I am informed, this Achilles has also withdrawn to his tent; he sulks—God knows why!—and sent word to the management that he would not furnish the twenty-five operas promised,

since he had determined to rest. What boastfulness! If a windmill said something of the sort, we should laugh no less. Either there is a wind and it turns, or there is no wind and the mill stands still. However, Donizetti has a most active cousin, Signor Accursi, here, who is certainly furnishing wind for Donizetti, more than enough; for Donizetti, as we have said, is the best among composers.

The latest artistic delight which the Grand Opéra has offered us is Halévy's "Lazzarone."¹ This work has had a sad fate: it fell flat with the kettle-drums and trumpets. As to its worth, I refrain from all comment. I merely establish its terrible end.

On every occasion when an opera falls flat at the *Académie de musique* or the *Opéra-Bouffe*, or some other notable *fiasco* occurs, the presence of a spare, sinister figure with a pallid face and coal-black hair, a sort of ancestral lady whose appearance always betokens some musical misfortune, may be observed. The Italians, as soon as they spy it, hastily thrust out their index and middle finger and say: That is the *jettatore*. The frivolous Frenchmen, however, who have not even a superstition, merely shrug their shoulders, and call the figure in question Monsieur Spontini. It is, in fact, our former general director of the Berlin Grand Opera, the composer of "La Vestale" and of "Ferdinand Cortez," two magnificent works which will long continue to bloom in the memory of mankind, which will long be admired, though their composer himself has long since forfeited all admiration, and is no more than a faded ghost, stalking about as an envious spectre, and vexing himself with the vitality of the living. He cannot console himself for the fact that he is long since dead, and that the sceptre of his rule has passed into the hands of Meyerbeer. The latter, so declares the deceased, had driven him from the Berlin he had always loved so fondly; and those whose pity for bygone greatness leads them to listen to him, may learn every little last detail of how he has already gathered together untold documentary evidence to reveal the Meyerbeerian intrigue. I have been told that German good-nature has already lent its pen to the task of editing these testimonials of folly.

The poor man's fixed idea is and remains Meyerbeer, and the most entertaining tales have been told to prove how this animosity is always rendered innocuous by too great an admixture of vanity. If some writer complains about Meyerbeer, saying the latter has still not set to music the poems which he had sent him years ago, Spontini hastily seizes the injured poet's hand and cries: "*J'ai votre affaire!*" I know a way by which you may be revenged on Meyerbeer. It is an

¹In the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* this paragraph appears with the following conclusion: "This work has met with a terrible fate. Halévy found his Waterloo in it without ever having been a Napoleon. A greater misfortune for him in this connection has been the defection of Maurice Schlesinger. The latter had already been his Pylades, and though Orestes Halévy might write the most successful opera, and it might fall flat in the most abject manner, his friend still continued to die for him and print the opus. In an age of self-seeking, such a spectacle of amicable self-sacrifice is always very pleasant, very refreshing. But now Pylades declares that his friend's insanity has increased to such a degree that he can publish nothing more of his lest he become insane himself."

In the French edition the close of the paragraph reads: "It is the work of a great artist, and I do not know the why it fell flat. Perhaps Halévy is of too careless a nature, and does not sufficiently cajole Monsieur Alexander, the contracting agent of stage successes, and the great friend of Meyerbeer."—*Transl.*

infallible way, and consists in your writing a long article about me, and the higher you praise my merits, the greater will be Meyerbeer's annoyance." On another occasion a French minister is indignant with the composer of "*Les Huguenots*" because, in spite of the urbanity with which he has been treated in Paris, he nevertheless accepts a servile court change in Berlin, and our Spontini leaps gladly up to the minister and cries: "*J'ai votre affaire!* You can punish the ingrate in the most severe manner. You can thrust him through with a dagger by making me a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor!" Not long ago Spontini finds poor Léon Pillet, the unfortunate director of the Grand Opéra, in a state of the most furious excitement against Meyerbeer, who had had him informed, through M. Gouin, that he would not yet give "*Le Prophète*," because of the wretched singing cast. How the Italians' eyes sparkled! "*J'ai votre affaire!*" he cried, delightedly. "You shall have a piece of God-given advice. If you wish to anger this arch-niggard to death, place a statue of me in the foyer of the Opéra, and this block of marble will crush Meyerbeer's heart like a mountain!" Spontini's state of mind is really beginning to cause his relatives, especially the family of the rich piano manufacturer Erard, with whom, through his wife, he is connected by marriage, much alarm. Not long since someone found him in the upper galleries of the Louvre, where the Egyptian antiquities are set up. For nearly an hour Sir Gasparo Spontini stood like a statue, with folded arms, before a large mummy, whose splendid gold mask showed it was that of a king—none less, it is said, than the Amenophis during whose reign the children of Israel left the land of Egypt. And finally, Spontini broke his silence and spoke as follows to the illustrious mummy: "Unhappy Pharaoh! You are the cause of my misfortune. Had you not allowed the children of Israel to depart out of the land of Egypt, or had you only had them all drowned in the Nile, I should not have been crowded out of Berlin by Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn and should still be conducting the Grand Opéra and the court concerts there! Unhappy Pharaoh! Vacillating king of crocodiles, it was due to your half-measures that I am now an utterly ruined man—and that Moses and Halévy and Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer have conquered!" Such remarks does the unfortunate man indulge in, and we cannot deny him our pity.

As regards Meyerbeer, his "*Le Prophète*" will, as we already have pointed out, be withheld for a long time. He himself will not, as the papers recently reported, take up his residence in Berlin permanently. He will, as heretofore, spend one half the year here in Paris and the other in Berlin, in rotation, and has formally pledged himself to do so. His position rather recalls that of Proserpine, save that the poor master finds his hell and hellish tortures in both places. We are still expecting him here this summer, in this lovely nether world, where a few gross of musical devils, male and female, are waiting to fill his ears with their howling. From morning until night he is obliged to listen to singers who wish to make their *début* here, and his hours of leisure are occupied with the autograph albums of travelling Englishwomen. I hear that "*Il Crociato*" is to be given next year by the Italians, and the revision which Meyerbeer has been persuaded to

make may call forth some new devilttries for him. At any rate he will not feel as though he were in heaven, when he now sees "Les Huguenots"—which always has to serve to fill the treasury after every failure—produced here. To tell the truth, only "Les Huguenots" and "Robert le diable" really live on in the public's mind, and these two master-works will long continue to rule.

There was no lack of débutantes this winter at the Grand Opéra. A German compatriot made his début as *Marcel* in "Les Huguenots." In Germany he was no more, perhaps, than a ruffian with a rumbling beer-voice, and on the strength of it thought he might produce himself in Paris as an artist. The fellow yelled like a wild ass. A lady, too, whom I suspect of being German, presented herself on the boards in the Rue Lepelletier. She is supposed to be extraordinarily virtuous, and sings quite out of tune. It is claimed that not alone her singing, but everything about her, her hair, two-thirds of her teeth, her lips, her posterior, are all false, that her breath alone is genuine; it will compel the frivolous Frenchmen to hold respectfully aloof from her. Our prima donna, Madame Stolz, will no longer be able to maintain herself, and though as a woman she controls all the wiles of her sex, in the end she will be overcome by the great Giacomo Machiavelli, who would like to see Viardot-Garcia engaged in her stead, in order to sing the leading rôle of his "Le Prophète." Madame Stolz sees her fate approaching, she senses that even the simian affection which the director of the Opéra cultivates for her will be unable to aid her, when the great master of tone exerts his magic arts; and she has determined to leave Paris voluntarily, never to return to it again, and to end her days in a foreign land. *Ingrata patria*, she said recently, *ne ossa quidem mea habebis!* To tell the truth, she has been nothing but skin and bones for some time.

Aux Italiens and at the *Opéra-Bouffe* they had just as brilliant fiascos last winter as at the Grand Opéra. There was much complaint anent the singers there, also, with the difference that the Italians, at times, would not sing, while the poor French heroes of song could not sing. Only that costly pair of nightingales, Signor Mario and Signora Grisi, were always punctually in their place in the Salle Ventadour, and evoked the liveliest of springs with their trills, while without were snow and wind, pianoforte concerts, debates of the Chamber of Deputies and the polka madness. Yes, they are charming nightingales, and the Italian Opera is the ever-blooming forest of song, where I often take refuge when befogged by wintry melancholy, or when the frosts of life grow unbearable. There, in the cosy corner of a partially screened box, one is at least agreeably warmed again, and one does not freeze to death of the cold. The magic of melody there turns into poetry what was but clumsy actuality a moment before; pain is lost in flowery arabesques; before long the heart laughs once more. What a delight when Mario sings, and in Grisi's eyes the tones of the beloved nightingale are reflected, as though in a visible echo! What a joy when Grisi sings, and the tender glance and enraptured smile of Mario melodically echo her voice. They are a charming pair, and the Persian poet, who called the nightingale the rose among birds and the rose the nightingale among flowers, would in this case find himself really perplexed,

since both Mario and Grisi are not only distinguished by their song, but by their beauty as well.

Despite this charming pair, however, we do not like to miss Pauline Viardot at the *Bouffes*, or, as we prefer to name her, the Garcia. She is no nightingale with nothing beyond the talent of her species, and sobs and trills the springtime *genre* in admirable fashion; nor yet is she a rose, for she is homely; however, it is a homeliness which is noble, one might almost say handsome, and which at times roused the great lion painter Lacroix to ecstasy. In fact, Garcia suggests less the civilized beauty and tame grace of our European homeland, than the terrible splendor of an exotic wilderness, and oftentimes her passionate delivery, when she opens her large mouth with its dazzling white teeth too widely, and smiles in a manner so cruelly sweet and with so graceful a dental gleam, one feels as though the most monstrous flora and fauna of Hindostan or Africa are bound to appear; one thinks, Now giant palms, girded by creepers with thousands of blossoms, will surely shoot up; and one would not be surprised if suddenly a leopard, or a giraffe, or a herd of elephant calves, were to run across the stage. We hear with great pleasure that this singer is once more on her way to Paris.

While the *Académie de musique* was lying prostrate in the most abject fashion, and the Italians were also dragging along very lamentably, a third lyric stage, the *Opéra-Comique*, has risen to its merriest heights. Here one success outdoes the other, and there is always a jingle in the cash-box. Yes, there even more money than laurel wreaths has been taken in, which was certainly no misfortune for the management. The texts of the new operas given were invariably written by Scribe, the man who once uttered the great saying: "Gold is a chimera," and now, nevertheless, is continually pursuing this chimera. He is a man of money, of sounding realism, who never loses himself in the romanticism of a fruitless cloud-world, and clings to the earthly reality of the common-sense marriage, *bourgeois* industrialism and royalties. Scribe's new opera, "La Sirène," for which Auber has written the music, has scored a tremendous success. Author and composer are exactly suited to each other; they have a most subtle feeling for what is interesting, they know how to entertain us agreeably, and they even delight and dazzle us with the brilliant facets of their wit. They possess a certain filigree talent in the combination of the most endearing trifles, and in their case one forgets that there is such a thing as poesy. They are, as it were, *lorettes* of art, who smile away all the ghost stories of the past out of our memories, and with their coquettish dalliance whisk away from us the buzzing thoughts of the future, those invisible gnats, as with fans of peacock feathers. Adam, too, is one of this innocuously wooing species, who has also harvested very frivolous laurels at the *Opéra-Comique* with his "Cagliostro." Adam is an amiably pleasing figure, and possesses a talent susceptible of greater development. Thomas, whose operetta "Mina" has been very successful, also deserves commendatory mention.

All these triumphs, however, were cast in the shade by the vogue of "Le Déserteur," an old opera by Monsigny, which the *Opéra-Comique* has resurrected from the files of oblivion. Here we have genuine French music, the happiest grace, an innocent sweetness, a freshness like the

fragrance of woodland flowers, the truthfulness of nature and even poesy. Yes, the latter is not missing; yet it is a poesy without a shudder of the eternal, without the magic of mystery, without melancholy, without irony, or morbidezza, I might also say it is the elegant rustic poesy of good health. Monsigny's opera at once reminds me of his contemporary, the painter Greuze; in it I seemed to behold a materialization of the bucolic scenes which the latter has painted, and seemed at the same time to hear the musical composition which belongs to them. While listening to this opera it was quite clear to me why the plastic and declamatory arts of one and the same period always breathe the selfsame spirit, and their masterpieces always disclose the closest affinity.

I cannot bring this account to a close without remarking that the musical season has not yet come to an end, and this year, contrary to all custom, is still sounding forth in May. The most important balls and concerts are being given at this moment, and the polka is still competing with the piano. Ears and feet are weary, but cannot rest as yet. The Spring, which made so early an entrance this time, has fallen flat; one hardly notices the green leaves and the sunshine. The physicians, especially those specializing in insanity, will soon have a great deal to do. In this multi-colored delirium, this rage for enjoyment, this singing, bounding whirlpool, death and madness lurk. The hammers of the pianos have a terrible effect upon our nerves, and the great turning-evil, the polka, gives us the final blow.

What is the polka? I should need at least six columns to answer this question. However, as soon as more important themes allow me the necessary leisure, I shall return to it.

LATER NOTICE

A melancholy caprice leads me to add to the foregoing communications the following pages, which belong to the summer of 1847, and form my last musical report. Since then all music has ceased to exist for me, and I did not suspect, when I was making a crayon sketch of Donizetti's suffering figure, that a similar and far more painful visitation was approaching me. The short art notice reads as follows:

Since Gustav Adolf, of glorious memory, no Swedish reputation has made such a noise in the world as that of Jenny Lind. The reports which reach us from England on this head touch on the incredible. The papers sound forth only trumpet blasts, fanfares of triumph; we hear nothing but Pindarian odes of praise. A friend told me of one English city where they rang all the bells when the Swedish nightingale made her entry; and the bishop of the place celebrated the event by a remarkable sermon. In his Anglican episcopal vestments, which somewhat resemble the mortuary costume of a *Chef de pompes funèbres*, of an undertaker, he mounted the pulpit in the principal church, and greeted the newly-arrived as a Messiah in female dress, as a Lady Redeemer, descended from heaven to free our souls from sin by her song; whereas the other singers are just so many devils trilling us into the jaws of Satan. The Italian Grisi and Persiani must now turn as yellow as canary-birds with envy; while our Jenny, the Swedish nightingale, flutters from triumph to triumph. I say "our Jenny," for at

bottom the Swedish nightingale does not represent little Sweden exclusively, but all the Germanic tribal communities, those of the Cimbri as well as those of the Teutons. She, too, is a German, every bit as much as her naturally grown and vegetably torpid sisters on the Elbe and the Neckar. She belongs to Germany, just as, according to Franz Horn's statement, Shakespeare also belongs to us, and similarly Spinoza, to judge by his inmost self, can only be a German—and it is with pride that we claim Jenny as our own. Rejoice, Untermark, you, too, have a share in her fame! Leap, Massmann, leap with your patriotically happiest bounds! for our Jenny speaks no Romanic jargon, but Gothic, Scandinavian, the most Germanic German, and you may greet her as a compatriot, only you must wash before you offer her your German hand! Yes, Jenny Lind is a German, the name Lind in itself suggests lindens, the green cousins of the German oaks; her hair is not black like that of the Guelph *prima donnas*, northern sentiment and moonlight float in her blue eyes, and in her voice sounds forth the purest virginity. That's it, "Maidenhood is in her voice!" That is what all the old spinsters of London say, every prudish lady and every pious gentleman repeats it, with a rolling of eyes, Richardson's still living *mauvaise queue* joins in the chorus, and all Great Britain celebrates in Jenny Lind a singing maidenhood, a virginity vocalized. We will admit that this is the secret of the incomprehensible, mysteriously great enthusiasm which Jenny has aroused in England, and, among ourselves be it said, knows very well how to exploit. She sings, so the rumor goes, only in order to be able to give up worldly song as soon as possible, and, provided with the necessary dower, to marry a young Protestant clergyman, Pastor Svenske, who in the meantime is waiting for her in the idyllic rectory back of Upsala, around the corner to the left. Since then it has been said that Pastor Svenske is no more than a myth, and the exalted maiden's real fiancée is a stale old comedian of the Stockholm stage—but that surely must be a falsehood! This *Primadonna immaculata*'s sense of chastity is revealed in its greatest perfection by her horror of Paris, the modern Sodom, which she expresses at all times, to the great edification of the lady patronesses of morality on the other side of the Channel. Jenny has vowed in the most decided fashion never to expose her singing maidenhood to the French public on the depraved boards of the Rue Lepelletier, and has severely declined all the offers which M. Léon Pillet has made her through the mediums of his ruffians of art. "This savage virtue makes me wonder," old Paulet would have said. Is there any truth in the popular legend that the nightingale of to-day enjoyed, in former years musical instruction at the sinful *Conservatoire*, like other song-birds, who since then have become very loose birds indeed? Or does Jenny fear that frivolous Parisian criticism which, in a singer's case, criticizes not her morals, but only her voice, and regards a lack of training as the greatest of sins? Be that as it is may, our Jenny is not coming here, and will not sing the Frenchmen out of their morass of depravity. They are delivered over to eternal damnation.

Here in the musical world of Paris all is as it was. In the *Académie royale de musique* grey, clammy-cold winter still reigns; while without we may have sunshine and the odor of violets. In the vestibule

the statue of the divine Rossini still stands in melancholy grieving; it keeps silence. It is to M. Léon Pillet's credit that he has set up a statue to this real genius while he is still alive. There is nothing more entertaining than to watch the grimace which envy and jealousy cut when looking at it. When Signor Spontini passes by there he invariably stumbles against this stone. Here our great master Meyerbeer was far wiser, and when he went to the Opéra of an evening, always carefully managed to avoid this marble offence—he even tried to avoid seeing it. In the same fashion the Jews in Rome, even on their most urgent business calls, always made a great *détour*, in order not to pass the fatal triumphal arch of Titus, which was erected to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem. The accounts of Donizetti's constitution grow more depressing, day by day. While his melodies cheer the world with their merry playfulness, while they are sung and hummed everywhere, he himself, a terrible image of imbecility, sits in a sanatorium near Paris. With regard to his appearance alone he has, until lately, retained some childish consciousness, and had to be carefully attired every day in complete evening dress, his coat adorned with all his decorations; and would thus sit without moving, from early morning until late at night. But even this has ceased, and now he no longer recognizes anyone. Such is the fate of man!

These Feuilletons of Heine might fitly be concluded with a paragraph picture from the seventh section of his posthumous *Thoughts and Fancies*. It is a picture musical in character, yet marked by the poesy which ennobles so much—though by no means all—of his prose writings on music and musicians:

The old harp lies in the high grass. The harpist has died. The talented monkeys come down from the trees and strum on it—the owl perches as a crabbed critic—the nightingale sings her song to the rose; as soon as darkness falls, her love overcomes her, she flings herself upon the rose-bush, and torn by the thorns, bleeds to death. The moon rises—the night wind murmurs through the harp-strings—the monkeys think it is the dead harpist, and take to flight.

(Translated by Frederick H. Martens)